Mr. Lewis Whitten

Mr. Lee Whitten
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Washington, D.C. 20036

1/17/76

Dear Lee,

Nothing personal. Just my usual waste of time trying to be helpful when nobody wants help or truth.

On the spur of the moment I could even make up a saying for you, like Columnists flayed J. Edgar dead when from the living Hoover they'd have fled.

Imagine me seeming to defend J. Edgar!

Jack would never have gone with today's item with Hoover alive. It also is false.

I did not write after the first one like this, about a week ago. The Post cut that piece out but our local paper carried it.

First the fact than the opinion.

"We have learned...that the FBI... held back ...on the pre-assassination activities of Lee Harvey Oswald." Then the non-sequitur, "Thus the commission accused Oswald of the murder without considering all the available facts."

What "we" do learn.

I'm not going to check for you because my recollections are good enough. I wrote about this in early 1967 at the latest.

St. Edgar was a Commission witness. He held these files in his hot grubby hands. As I recall it Alan Belmont was with him. He did offer the Commission all. Literally. And Earl Warren refused to look at it. Personally and verbally.

I'm not really defending the Founding Father. I'm saying you ought not underestimate him of credit self-seeking sources. You'll find this in my Oswald in New Orleans and if you do not have that in the Commission's hearings, Vol. 5.

(I've had an FOIA request for all of this for a long time. If you want to push it provide counsel and I'll give it to you. If you do not want to push it I'll give it away if and when I get it. I can file a complaint any time I want to. When I get back to that book, one I laid aside 5-7 years ago when the editors raved and there was no contract, I'll file.)

The time is going to come when Jack's kids and their kids are going to be asking what he was up to when a whole system of society was turned around and subverted by crimes like the JFK assassination. He can't blame this on Drew, as he can that disinformation operation from Morgan.

This is still another currying of committee favor. You'll learn that without the most radical change this committee is a bummer.

"Now there are disturbing reports that the FBI and CIA are directing an undercover campaign against the committee." Maybe. I have no knowledge either way. But I have an opinion: they are crazy if they do now. Perhaps this would change later but as of now you (meaning the column) have a problem with simple English. This committee has said that the FBI was right in the JFK and King assassinations. Only maybe there was a conspiracy. Hell, Hoover even covered the FBI on that in 1964. And on King he did the same thing in a different way. He filed a conspiracy charge in Birmingham.

"...are spreading deregatory stories about the committee." Maybe they are. I sure as hell can, and truthfully, entirely factually. I've a hunch I can tell you who the source on the nonsense about Ray having a conspiratorial meeting in Portugal was. You can call him. But you want because it looks like this committee will help fill the terrible demands of a daily column. If it develops the courage for fact you knew well enough where to turn for the legitimately and factually sensational.

I have no personal resentment over or problem with this kind of journalistic garbage. We have never discussed my beliefs so you have no way of knowing how you have all over again given me credentials. If you'd read more of my work you'd know that it says that in time of great crisis all of the basic organs of society, all of society's protections, fail. I regard the press as one.

My concern is that with each failure we become more authoritarian.

Today Sorensen took himself out.

There has been much on his alleged sins in the press lately. I have never spoken to him, seen him in person or corresponded with him. But I'm sure the speeks did not want him in charge.

By the time you can get this and do a column our first unelected will be history on skis. So maybe you could find a column on his doing more of the same and worse? He stole a top secret Warren Commission executive session transcript and sold it commercially. Were this not enough he lied about it under oath in his confirmation hearings. And were this not enough he edited it while pretending to reproduce it verbatim, with no changes or editing.

What else does it take to be the first unelected.

Or not to be able to oversee the wild animals trampling the forests.

This on Ford I've published, with facsimiles. It is the the last, the fourth, of my Whitewash series.

I don't know whether you realize it but you are now using descriptions I used in titles more than 10 years ago. Like Coverup.

But to end with the beginning, your "withheld essential fact" you do not state or explain, the Commission knew and did not want any essential fact. If it had wanted what it did not have, and the most essential I have no reason to believe the FBI had, there was no power to prevent them from getting it. Including Hoover.

Did the FBI withhold? Sure. Did the Commission know it? Sure. I've referred you to some of this in my writing. There is another where you do not have to quote me. Ask Charles Shaffer, who was one of John Dean's lawyers, if he did not write an early memo on this, calling it as I recall "Information breakdown." I think I have it in facsimile in Post Mortem, which you do have.

The sun riseth and the sun setteth and what else is new, friend?

Sincerely,